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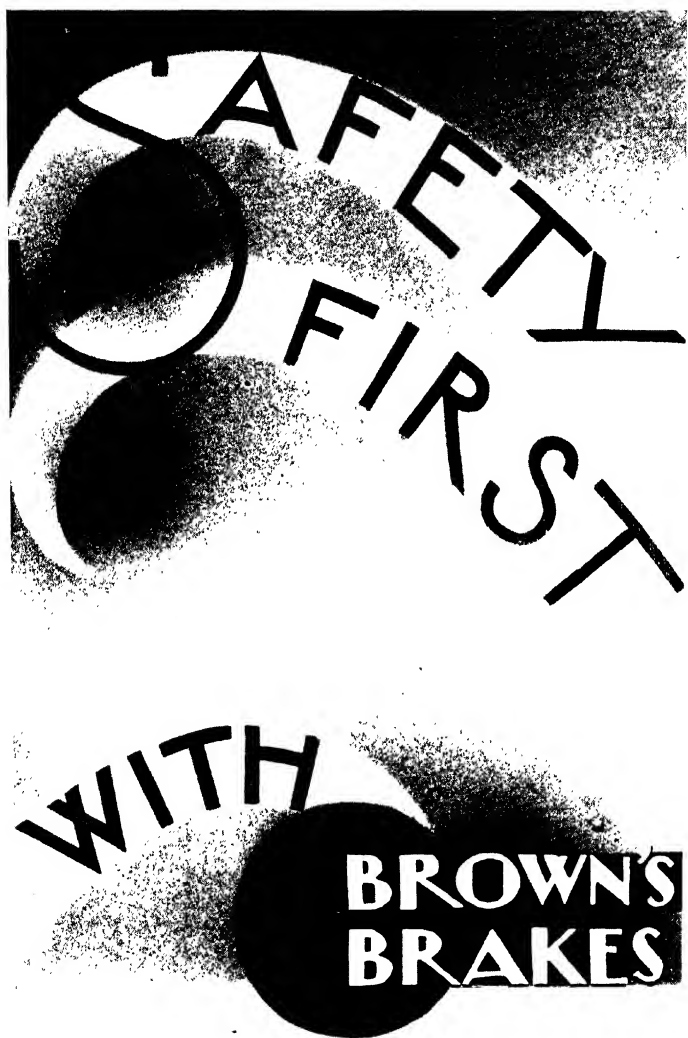
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*A Manual on
Lettering and Lay-out*

*To promote a full appreciation of good lettering,
to encourage original and sound design, both in
letters and their arrangement, and to give the
essential technique for a proficient lettering
artist : these are the purposes of this book.*



Frontispiece.

PLATE I. - AN EXAMPLE OF AIR BRUSH WORK.

(Reduced from 9 ins. · 6 ins.)

Lettering and Lay-out.

A MANUAL ON LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

*Including Illuminating
and Book Decoration*

By

L. A. DOUST

AUTHOR OF

"A Manual on Sketching from Life"

"A Manual on Caricature and Cartoon Drawing," Etc.

With Thirty-two Illustrations by the Author



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Introduction

“ . . . Many shapes and figures,
Wonderful and mystic figures,
And each figure had a meaning,
Each some word or thought suggested.”
The Song of Hiawatha.

THE letters and words we use have been shaped by time and history : they are wonderfully accommodating to all circumstances and subjects : they may, by the careless or unfeeling, be made very ugly ; but, conversely, to the artist they offer an admirable field of design : they may express wisdom, roaring farce, or noble thought.

Then is it not a worthy work to draw a letter well and to arrange a word or sentence ably ? Is there not useful scope for the artist in the design of these simple signs ?

A Manual on Lettering and Lay-out

CHAPTER I

THE JUSTIFICATION OF HAND-LETTERING

It is quite useless to attempt to draw lettering of any kind without a love or, at least, a keen respect for it.

Any word, whether written, drawn, or printed, must be clearly and readily legible. A word is an arrangement of lines which, by use and agreement, have an understood meaning in the minds of many men. Primitive writing was a series of pictures telling the tale. Later these became simplified into a shape understood to mean what the picture had previously expressed. Writing is a code, usually a national code. A code must of necessity and above all be readable. The foregoing not only suggests the romance of lettering, but emphasizes the necessity for its legibility.

The second fundamental is arrangement and design, which may be divided into two sections—the design of the letters or type and the arrangement of words in a given space. There are examples of both in this book, and the title intimates this division—Lettering and Lay-out.

It is known to everyone that there are many

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

variations in the design of our English alphabet. Fat, thin, straight, curved, short, tall, square, round—it is but necessary to glance through the plates of this book to realize the possible variations.

Better still, turn to the advertisements in a daily, weekly, or monthly publication, and note the different types, and you will realize what a scope for imaginative design there is in this art. Take a magazine or newspaper and cut out a specimen of each type used (especially in the advertisements); it will surprise and instruct you. You will observe from such study that the good advertisements are those which have lettering suitable in feeling to the subject advertised. Suitability is a keyword when designing your type.

On Plate 2, Fig. A, you see a style of lettering quite suitable for clothing—not too heavy and decidedly smart. Fig. B shows one which harmonizes with such a subject as petrol—it is mechanical and strong—without being too heavy. At Fig. C we have a sinuous style which certainly suggests silks. The next word, “playbox,” Fig. D, is drawn in simple but slightly grotesque manner (observe P, B, and X); and the last, Fig. E, is purely commercial and has a full round solidness certainly reminiscent of pease pudding if not of scarlet runners.

We have now discussed briefly the three factors of lettering—two being factors of the execution, and the third being a feature of the thought or idea: readability—arrangement—suitability. Just a few more words on arrangement or design. The use of the word lettering of course means hand-lettering as contrasted to type. Modern type has very many

A **CLOTH**

B **PETROL**

C **SILKS**

D **PLAYBOX**

E **BEANS**

PLATE 2.—SUITABILITY OF STYLE AND DESIGN

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

excellent faces, *i.e.*, styles of design: in fact, it requires an experienced eye to tell some modern type faces from hand-lettering; but there is one test which no type face that I know of can survive.

Type, by the necessity for slotting in a machine, is made on rectangular blocks of metal as shown at Fig. A, Plate 4. Now this forbids any overlapping such as shown at base of letter A, Fig. B₁, and however well a face is designed there are times when, to get a balance or proportion in spacing, it is essential to overlap. This is illustrated in Figs. B and B₁, where you have a simple type face at B and at B₁ the same word drawn with a care for balance. You will observe that in Fig. B₁ the letter A overlaps or comes "within" the letter B. The result is sufficient to justify hand-lettering for ever, although this illustration is a most moderate example. You will also note the wider spacing of the N's and I.

At Figs. C and C₁ you see a very clear example of this spacing between the I and the D: and again at Fig. D₁ you observe how the bases of the A slopes are tucked under the T and C, making for an infinitely better balance. The unfortunate space between the T and A at Fig. D is a peculiarly blatant example of this unavoidable fault in type. The general rule for the balance or proportion of letters is to get about an equal space area between each letter. These spaces are shaded in at Fig. B₁, and you will heed the comparative equality of each shaded area. All letters with spaces completely enclosed, *viz.*, R's, O's, A's, D's, B's, P's, look after themselves in so far as they do not affect the

GOOD'S


PIANOS

FOR TONE AND
WORKMANSHIP
UNSURPASSED



GOOD LTD., REGENT ST. LONDON

PLATE 3. THE USE OF HALF TONES.
(Reduced from $8\frac{1}{2}$ ins. $5\frac{1}{2}$ ins.)

A 

Delin

B 

B **BANNING**

B1 **BANNING**

C **LIVID**

D **STACK**

C1 **LIVID**

D1 **STACK**

E **VISION**

E1 **VISION**

PLATE 4.—SPACING OF HAND-LETTERING AS OPPOSED TO TYPE.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

balance of the word. It is strange but true that a word such as VISION as drawn at Fig. E₁ may have a very full O and V combined with a narrow S, N and I's, yet losing nothing in readability and balance; but, if there is carelessness in designing the spaces *between* the letters, both of these qualities are weakened, even when the letters themselves are more orthodox. Please remember always that balance is one great virtue of good hand-lettering. Other advantages of hand-lettering will be discussed as we examine our plates.

May I now recall again to your mind the three fundamentals of lettering—readability, balance, and suitability. Analyse under these three headings specimens of lettering on showcard, poster, or advertisement in magazine or daily paper. Are the words easily read? Are the letters drawn with balance? Is the style suitable for the subject?

CHAPTER II

PRELIMINARY FACTS AND EXERCISES

BEFORE you can design lettering it is essential that you know of the pure historic style ; that is to say, the style upon which our lettering is based.

Practically all type and lettering found in books, magazines and papers of to-day are Roman style ; on Plate 5 is a complete Roman alphabet which you will do very well to study most closely. Look at each letter separately ; notice the perfect circle of O, the half-circles in the U, R, S, etc. Compare the width of each letter ; observe the W made up of two V's ; the width of the A and the H. ; the narrowness of the J, L, S.

Before attempting actual lettering any entirely inexperienced reader who wishes to do as well as read should turn to Plate 6. Here he will find a few simple but by no means easy or useless exercises. Exercises are the bane of all arts, but they are a human necessity, fortunate or unfortunate as it may be ; and here they are.

Fig. A, vertical lines—draw them freehand, parallel and equally spaced.

Figs. B and C, similar exercise, with sloped lines.

Figs. D, E and F, curved lines, in D with the same curve, in E and F parallel.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

Figs. G and H, double curved lines, in G with same curve, in H parallel.

Fig. I, horizontal lines, widening, thickening.

Figs. J and K, radiating lines.

Figs. L and M, wriggly lines.

All worth continual practice with pen, first twice or three times the size shown; then try them with a long thin sable brush. Work boldly, but very carefully. Do all twice or three times the size shown here. Draw in pencil if you wish, but drop all preparation lines as soon as possible. Learn to move the whole arm, not merely the wrist, when drawing long lines.

Having trusted you to do these rather boring exercises, I lead you gently to the next movement of progress.

Our beautiful Roman alphabet is an admirable field upon which to cultivate a supple ability in pen and especially brush. I, personally, advise the use of a brush throughout your lettering, practice and finished work.

Draw some guiding lines as shown on Plate 5, Letter A, not only for the top and bottom of the letters but also for the cross-pieces of E, R, etc. Draw in pencil neatly and accurately. Try to draw each straight line entire, but with curves do not strain to draw more than is easily natural as suggested at Fig. P, Plate 6. You may use a rule for the straight lines, but I deprecate the use of a compass for curves, even circles. Always draw the left side of a letter first, using the point or corner of the brush for the serifs as at

À B C D E
F G H I J K
L M N O P
Q R S T U
V W X Y Z

PLATE 3.—CLASSIC ROMAN LETTERING.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

Fig. o, Plate 6. Draw the verticals first as suggested at Figs. n and q.

Keep practising different letters until you can draw any of them freely and fairly accurately, with no pencil preparation apart from guiding lines which give the height. Try not to do all this practice without a conscious interest in the beauty of the lines. There is a charm, nay, a fascination, in doing well even such a small thing as the drawing of a single line. Practise, practise, and you will add to your joys of life as well as to your ability in a very useful art.

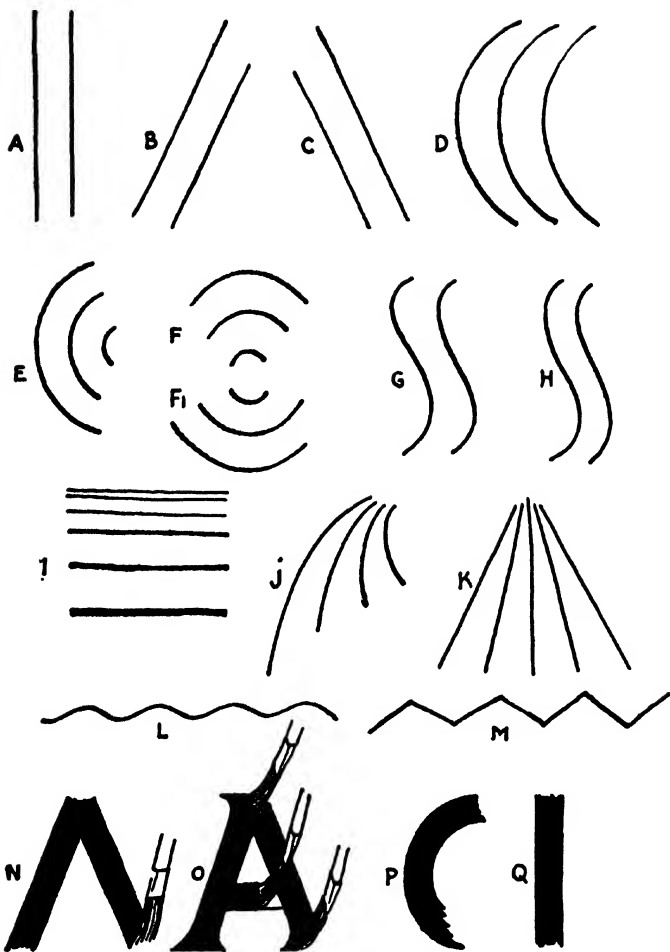


PLATE 6.—PRELIMINARY EXERCISES.

CHAPTER III

MODERN STYLES

LET us now further discuss possible styles, suitable variations, and legitimate tricks by which the hand-letterer may surpass in beauty and attraction the many faces of type.

On Plate 7, Fig. A, we have a fancy form of capitals, which, although very ordinary and similar to some types in its outline, yet has the interesting variation of small white snicks round the edge, giving it a very original effect.

Fig. B of this plate reminds us somewhat of the Neuland type, so popular in to-day's advertisements; but once again there is sufficient originality to make it extremely arresting, combining as it does interior sharp straight lines with exterior curved ones. I have but one criticism, and that is that the E would look better with a curved back as at Fig. E, Plate 11: not only would this have been in harmony with the principle as above described, but it would have saved the slightly cramped appearance at this point. As it is in the plate, there should be more space between the R and the E.

Fig. C is another class of this type of capital. Its principle is the cutting off of the top and bottom, as shown clearly in the O, and the use of a diamond cross-piece as in H.

A **LOOK**

B **PROGRESS**

C **“THIS SHADOW SHOW
OF PRINTING**

D **ADVERT**

E **SPACES**

F **DISPLAY**

PLATE 7.—MODERN CAPITALS.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

I do not desire you to copy these or indeed any of the plates in this book. My aim is to plant, where necessary, and to encourage a "lettering" mind in my readers; and to make them see the attraction and beauty of letters and the great opportunities for an inventive and original mind in this field of art. Consequently, the space devoted to materials and technical details is limited. There are many "lettering" men with an able knowledge of their craft and of much dexterity with their tools, but they are still writing simple signs on house agents' boards, etc., solely because they have neglected to look at letters as things of possible beauty and design. Learn all you can, by all means, about your material, but remember that it is not knowledge that makes the artist; it is love of beauty, balance, harmony.

From this explanatory and perhaps delayed digression let us turn to our plate again. In Figs. D, E and F there are shown three modern faces of capitals, all hand-drawn, all different, yet all of the same style. Such are usually designed for advertisements which demand a modern outlook, as, for example, millinery, costumes, or even motor-cars—anything which is a thing of fashion and hence in which a modern note must be struck.

I do not claim that each of these specimens is excellent lettering. Fig. F is certainly less readable than Fig. E; but here again you must look upon them as examples only, and not specimens to copy or memorize. They certainly do suggest modernism and distinction. In such lettering where some of the letter lines are thin you will note that our rule

^A **Display**

^B **Now to
turn it
to good**

^C *Lettering*

^D *Outshines
the Sun* ^E *Going Up!*

^F **commercial**

^G **Letterhead**

^H **Never take**

PLATE 8.—MODERN LOWER-CASE LETTERING.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

for even space areas between the letters has been modified, as clearly shown in Fig. F, where the inside of the letters D and P are included in the space areas, owing to the thin lines carrying hardly any weight.

Plate 8 shows some "lower-case" or small lettering. A glance at this plate will give you a faint idea of the variety possible in lower-case face. Much can be done with capitals which would not be safe in the lower-case face, especially in extreme thickness and thinness of line as just examined. It is an old axiom of lettering never to make the thin lines too thin, but, as we have seen, the ingenuity of the modern mind has provided many exceptions of this rule. Yet it still holds good for those unskilled, and in lower-case face that it is a true rule will be obvious if you turn to Plate 8, where it must be admitted that Fig. B is more easily read than Fig. C, and Fig. D than Fig. A. Life is made up of compromise or "give and take," and so in Figs. A and C legibility is partially sacrificed to suitability of style. One cannot always have perfect suitability and perfect readability, but one can always have perfect balance or arrangement.

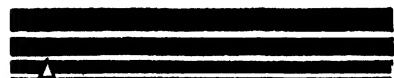
The Fig. A on Plate 8 is an example of what may be done in lower-case face when using extreme thick and thin lines: note the outward curve of uprights. Here is a satisfactory and original lower-case face of strongly contrasted line-thickness.

Fig. C is graceful, delicate, and admirably spaced: note especially the long lower line of the e's which fill the space so nicely.

At Fig. D is shown a rather ordinary form of

DEVISE AND PRODUCE

A



A perfect
photograph
is the basis
of a perfect
block



B



OF
ADVERTISE

D

STYLISH
MART
SHOES
C

E BUSINESS

PLATE 9.—VARIATIONS OF HAND-LETTERING.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

script writing ; but it is worth studying on account of its interesting freedom or irregularity combined with clarity of reading. The short line at the top of the h is very necessary to distinguish it from t or l.

Script writing is of course entirely hand-work. Type can give Italics, but script if successfully drawn is extremely useful for eye-catching phrases such as this Fig. D. Fig. B is original in many parts, yet very readable. Study it closely—the w with only three strokes—the tall t and the quaint r. Such individual and inventive variations give this lettering its distinction.

Fig. F is another example of a plain common type changed by the artist into an original and beautiful design, yet losing very little, if any, of its legibility.

I have put in Figs. G and H as examples of good straightforward lower-case face hand-lettering, each considerably better than type by reason of better spacing and slight variations from the orthodox. Note in Fig. H how the e's overlap their neighbours—also the k. Note in Fig. G the linked t's with their varying base—also the simple r.

There is one important feature to heed in this page of specimens—r's are drawn with a quite short arm. This is because the space under the arm, if full, is prone to be too large and to look empty, thereby breaking our rule of equal space between letters. Hence in lower-case face keep the arm of your r short, whether in thick or thin style.

Continually is one facing the two strong advantages of hand-lettering over type, however good and modern the latter may be, first in balance or spacing,

MODERN STYLES

and secondly in absolute individuality and adaptation to subject and space. We approach yet another quality only to be obtained in hand-drawn work—that of line attachments on Plate 9.

Fig. A of this plate shows a style of lettering indistinguishable from the well-known Neuland type, but the great “pull” of this design is the line linking the V and the P. This could only be done with extreme trouble in type and even then would be obviously stuck on.

In Fig. B again we have a fairly orthodox modern lower-case face, but beautifully hand-drawn and consequently with each letter carefully spaced: here note the original arm of r's and the tail of g. The feature, however, of this figure is the lining above, with the break into the large A from black to white.

Fig. C shows a popular trick reserved for hand-lettering, *i.e.*, the use of one capital for three words—a trick not to be often used, and never on a poster or any such form of publicity where quickness of message is essential.

Fig. D shows a good use of tone in drawn lettering. Type may be reversed from black on white to white on black, but when it is so changed the discrepancies of spacing become lamentably obvious. In this hand-drawn example you will observe the overlapping of the V, R and T—awkward letters in any type.

Fig. E carries out a simple underlining. In type the line would have to be apart from the letters, and away would go the attractive originality of this design. Observe that the line is of a thickness in

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

harmony with the letters, also that the spacing balance is excellent notwithstanding the huge N and heavy B. Certainly the first S might have a little less room, but such a little that the greatest care would be needed if one would not spoil the whole, as the S is a key letter in the word. By key letter I mean one upon which the meaning and sound rests. The U, I, E and last S are of minor importance; this may be proved by writing "bsns," which being pronounced is "business." In single important words always err on the generous side, in spacing, around the key letters.

And we now come to a fourth and very obvious advantage of hand over type. You will notice at once that all the figures on Plate 10 show curved lettering. Metal type must be set straight—drawings may be any angle or curve, for they are made into one whole block.

The value of sloping lines such as shown at Fig. B has been questioned by experts in commercial art; and, to a great extent, I am in agreement with these critics when they maintain that any lettering out of the straight is not so readable. Certainly sloping letters associated with straight type usually gives a "scrappy" effect. Emphasis may be obtained by a curve or slope, but well-designed lettering should need no twisting for emphasis. Any diversion from the horizontal is a strain to the reader's eyes and is less likely to be read, as when scanning advertisements the reader automatically takes the line of least resistance. There is one possible and occasional exception to this strict rule. For eye-catchers or slogans I think such juggling

A Zonal
Sales

TRY
B

D SMART

C BEAUTY

E BRIGHT

F ready-made

PLATE 10.—SLOPING AND CURVED LETTERING.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

suitable at times, so long as it is made startling, strong, and snappy.

Fig. A is a good example of crooked lettering legitimately used as an eye-catcher. Fig. C is simple, but certainly it is also compelling, especially owing to the enclosing arc lines. Fig. D shows the useful variation on sloping lettering of keeping the uprights vertical. A comparison of this Fig. D with Fig. B will show that the former is read more easily. Fig. E is yet another suggestion, the sharp angle being in harmony with the word used. In Fig. F the gentle curve is counteracted by the long lines of the d's, which help the eye to adjust itself to the curve just as the lines of Fig. C aid the eye to follow the letters.

However, please remember that all these examples are for eye-catching phrases, and I do not advise the use of such for names of products, title pages, headings, leading lines, or any wording which, unattractive in itself perhaps, must at all costs be very readable.

Before we consider the actual compositions or lay-out of a ticket, card, or bill, I would like you to turn to Plate 11. Here we have one word drawn in seven different styles. The word itself is a clue to the purpose of the plate. One cannot always obtain clearness by means of simplicity and boldness. At most times it is necessary to get a "fancy" style, and yet, as we have already stated, clearness must be a feature of your lettering.

Fig. A is plain lettering; it is clear yet by no means unattractive; it is plainer in style, owing to absence of serifs, than the classic Roman of Plate 5,

A CLEARNESS

B CLEARNESS

C CLEARNESS

D CLEARNESS

E CLEARNESS

F CLEARNESS

G CLEARNESS

PLATE II.—VARIATIONS PLUS LEGIBILITY.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

yet there is to me a greater charm about it, due perhaps to the slight convexity of the uprights.

In the remaining specimens I have tried to show how clearness may be retained even in extreme styles. Fig. B owes its clearness to the fact that the tops of the letters have not been tampered with. It is a proven fact that our eyes in reading see only the tops of letters. Take a line of type and cover the lower half with a piece of paper, and you will yet be able to read the words, but if you reverse this test and cover only the top half you will find it quite impossible to understand most of the letters. Hence it is safer to confine any tricks of design or extreme variations to the lower half of the letters. If you test this Fig. B in the above way you will truly appreciate this point.

Fig. C is a square style with the letters very close together. It is a safe rule, seldom to be broken, that letters should tend to squareness as they get narrower or closer. This is obviously a sound rule, for such letters as C, J and G, as they get narrower, get straighter and more alike (see the letter C of Fig. D), and the sensible way to prevent this confusing similarity is to square the curves.

Fig. D is plain block lettering well spread. The great necessity in any such wide-spread style is good and even spacing.

Fig. E is perhaps the least clear of all these specimens, owing to the similarity of the C and E's. You will notice how this unfortunate similarity is avoided in the previous example, Fig. D, by the squaring of the E's. Another weakness of Fig. E is its close spacing combined with extreme thick

MODERN STYLES

and thin lines. This is very risky. The use of very thick verticals combined with thin transverses does not tend to a readable style, and consequently such should be free from any other hindrances such as close or wide spacing.

Fig. F is very fantastic in form, but is decidedly legible owing to moderate spacing and absence of variation in thickness. Also please note that most of the "frills" or curves are on the lower half of the letters.

Fig. G is excellent in spacing, is readable because the E's are squared, and also because there is practically no variation in the thickness of line. Each letter, although so swollen, is very distinct and individual in shape.

From these few examples I want to impress the lesson that, whatever your style, readability or clearness must have a place; the more fantastic or fanciful the style the more thought and consideration must you give to legibility.

I will now briefly mention the shadowing of letters. This is not admired or cultivated by the more artistic of letterers, but in much commercial work it has its uses and excuses. An artist will argue that a letter is not a material substance but a code for a mental activity or thought, and that, therefore, one should not suggest materialism by giving such three dimensions when the thought is as clearly expressed by a letter of two dimensions. This is true, but if you are a sign-writer and have to write a grocer's name above his door; if you are an advertiser's artist and have to advertise a beef extract on the hoardings; if you are an illustrator

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

and have to do a heading for a twopenny weekly ; then you may well claim a use for this abused practice of shadowing and its allies.

Plate 12, Fig. A, shows simple shadowing ; Fig. B shows simple outlining ; Fig. C shows shadowing separated from the letter ; and Fig. D shows a complete word with vertical shading, a form which is very attractive, modern, and of much effect.

At Fig. E of this plate is shown the useful expedient of shadows inside a letter giving a hollow appearance. By careful adjustment this can easily be made to express the reverse, a convex surface. Having suggested the idea, I leave to your judgment the occasions when a use of it will be suitable.

So also with Fig. F, in which we have shadow only—no outline. Not often may one play with our respected alphabet in this way. But in colour work, where one has painted, say, orange letters on a blue surface of about the same tone value as the orange, then it is helpful to add such lines as at Fig. F in darker tone, thereby separating the even tones of orange and blue and enhancing their separate colours. Someone may ask, “ Why not a line all round the letters in such a case ? ” Because that would make the letters jump away from the background more than is perhaps desired.

Modern designers have gone far in the combination of lettering and design. In days of old but little attempt was made to include the lettering in the design. Capitals were sometimes decorated, but even then the letter itself was not varied to blend with the decoration. Now, when so much

A D B S C B

D CAIRO

A SQUARE E

F EXAM

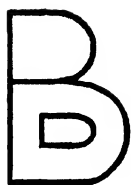
PLATE 12.—SHADOWING.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

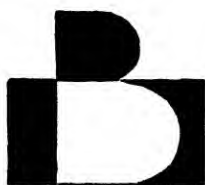
commercial art is symbolic and is primarily a design harmonising with the subject, hand-lettering has received a definite impetus and has a claim entirely its own.

As I have described the trend and aims of modern commercial art in my books of this series, "A Manual on Figure Drawing and Fashion Designing" and "A Manual on Caricature and Cartoon Drawing," I will not repeat my words, but call your attention to Plate 13. Here are seven varieties of design on the capital letter B, but all of the same face, a plain letter with no serifs. Let us briefly examine each of these examples.

Fig. A is, obviously, for a refined and smart design. Fig. B is much stronger and would suit a bold lay-out of modern outlook. Fig. C is more grotesque. Fig. D is extremely smart and would look well in a design for men's wear. Fig. E would be quite unsuitable for use in the name or title of a poster as it is not strong or clear enough. But for a catch word or slogan capital it would be unusual and attractive. Fig. F is another grotesque style, very arresting, but requiring the style of design around it to be in strict harmony. Fig. G, in which I have associated lower-case letters with the capital, is comparatively ordinary and simple. You will observe how the heavy black masses do not conflict with the legibility of the thinly lined word. Also note the spot of tone beneath the letter n which balances the black masses of the capital. Note, too, how the black base of the B is carried along to join the r, thus preventing the B from standing away from the rest of the word and



A



B



C



D



E



F



G

PLATE 13.—MODERN DESIGN IN CAPITALS.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

encouraging the eye to read the word as a whole.

All these specimens depend upon the design, into which they are fitted, for success. Sometimes one may conceive a happy design by working on a single letter and then basing the whole work on that; sometimes one has to find a fitting letter-shape for a special design. Both methods are good, but never use a specially designed lettering irrespective of the rest of your design. This point is emphasized in the next chapter.

Approach lettering with an adventurous outlook but with caution. Do not be restricted by convention or custom but do not ignore the virtues of old or restrained forms. How very much more compelling is Fig. G of this plate than an ordinary type face!

At times you will have to emphasize one word of a slogan or sentence. You must exercise great care in any effort of emphasis, or a scrappy muddled effect will result. Examples of emphasis are to be seen on Plate 14. Fig. A has one or two useful lessons. First you will note that the word "you" is emphasized by thickening the strokes to their utmost. I have not altered materially the style of lettering, keeping to the thick down-stroke and thin up-stroke. The chief changes are: the thickness, the use of capitals, and the shortening of those capitals to the size of the lower-case.

The second example is a simple one, that of increasing very much the size of your lettering. This method is only suitable for a "capital" first letter emphasis and would not look at all well

Will **you** be

O **F** COURSE

THE NEW CAR

SPEDE

PLATE 14.—EXAMPLES OF EMPHASIS.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

if the word so enlarged was in the centre of the sentence.

Fig. c shows a very effective form of emphasis which will suggest to you many variations. The vertical lines beneath the word "NEW" not only point to the name beneath, but strongly emphasize the word "NEW." When using such lines one must take great care to obtain the correct thickness. To have them too thick is to overwhelm the lettering; to make them too thin is to lose the emphasis aimed at and, also, will have a muddled effect. Note that the lines are about half the thickness of the lettering downstrokes; and, regarded with eyes half-closed, the weight or tone value of the whole drawing is about even.

I will now say a word on a difficulty which often besets the hand-letterer. You may have to fit a certain word into a certain space of fixed height and length. You may find your word too long. There are only two ways to overcome this difficulty. One is shown at Fig. A, Plate 15, and the other at Fig. c, Plate 15.

At Fig. A you see a word "squashed"—that is to say, the letters overlap. Yet it is readable. As a rule, do not use a thick and thin form of lettering when squashing, as such will tend to confuse. The simpler the style the better; not too thin, as thin lines tend to lose their power of direction and you will get too much criss-crossing. This method requires to be very carefully laid out and planned.

Fig. c is a style suitable only for certain words. When certain letters justify emphasis by their

ECONOMY

A

ECONOMY

B

^C **ECONOMY**

^D **ECONOMY**

PLATE 15.—OVERLAPPING AND “SQUASHING.”

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

similarity, peculiarity or suitability, *e.g.*, if the name of an economical floor polish was Ono then this design (Fig. c) would be excellent.

Fig. d is a possible alternative of Fig. c, of surprising power of attraction, the two large O's becoming eye-catchers.

Fig. b of this plate is an example of overlapping. Certainly it is not remarkable for its legibility, but as a novel eye-catching sales word, it is useful, and will, I have no doubt, suggest to you the possibilities of "squashed" letters for commercial publicity. Such arrangements have to be carefully prepared; in fact the preparatory lines for such lettering constitute a diagram of accurately measured spaces.

Of course, as I have repeatedly said, your style of lettering will depend upon your main design, the subject of the design, and the purpose for which you are drawing the design whether poster, show-card, folder or newspaper advertisement. In the following chapter I discuss lay-out and design of lettering arrangements for these various purposes.

CHAPTER IV

LAY-OUT OR ARRANGEMENT OF LETTERING

LET us now study the lay-out of a simple ticket. Fig. A, Plate 16, shows the first and obvious setting for such a ticket—such a lay-out as would occur to anyone. You will also notice that the lettering is very orthodox. The result is safe and sound, but uninteresting, as are so many safe, sound things, from occupations to food.

Let us attempt some small adventure in the arrangement and style of this card. My first thought is to modernize the lettering by the deletion of serifs and the strengthening of the minor vertical lines. The result at Fig. B is certainly an advance in publicity value over Fig. A.

The next suggestion which occurs to me is to place the words out of the centre as at Fig. C, and the consequent pushing over of the price. Please note that I have made the two words of equal length by means of a careful design of lettering, including a wide N, V, A, T, and narrow F, E, and L. I must here digress awhile on this matter of widening and narrowing letters.

There are certain letters which one may narrow, others which may be widened, and yet others which

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

it is advisable to keep normal in width. Let me list them. Those which may be narrowed are E, F, J, L, P, R, S, Y, Z; those which may be widened are A, C, D, G, H, O, V, Q; and those to be kept normal are B, K, M, N, T, U, W, X (of these, M, W, and X are by nature as wide as they may legibly be). And so in our words FINEST VALUE we may happily level the words up and thereby obtain a simple rectangle. Such a shape for a phrase—and it is very usual to arrange words, even long passages, in some definite rectangular shape—is not only helpful to the design but actually makes the words more readable because the eye returns automatically the same distance on reaching the end of each line. It would obviously be very confusing to read a book where every line commenced at a different distance from the page edge. This confusion applies in only a lesser degree in the two words FINEST VALUE and all such short phrases. Shorter illustrations of this will occur on a later plate.

Let us now comment upon the placing to one side of these words and the price of Fig. c. You may fairly ask why either should be worked from the centre. Well, it is an acknowledged fact of composition that an exact symmetrical design, that is where everything is centred, is not so interesting or arresting as the unsymmetrical balanced design.

In my book of this series entitled, "A Manual on Sketching Sea, Town, and Country," I have explained by diagram the simple laws of design as applied to a picture, and as the same laws apply throughout

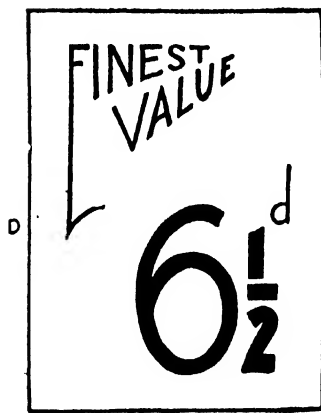
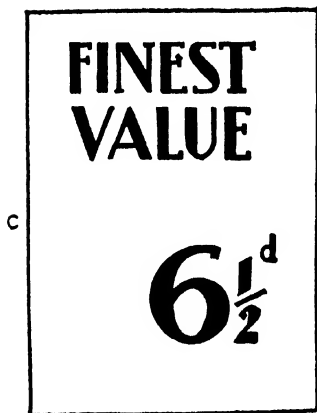
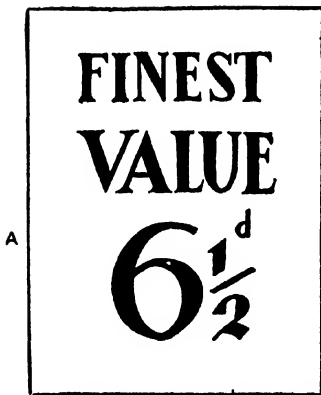


PLATE 16.—PRICE TICKET LAY-OUT.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

art and especially in lay-out for advertisements I suggest that you refer to this one of my art books. If you know anything of pictorial composition you may safely apply it to showcard, price ticket, or any other form of publicity design. There are limitations of course, owing to lack of perspective, but the principle of balance cannot be changed.

When it has been decided that there is an attraction in the placing of the words out of the centre, it is plain to anyone that the price must be moved over in the opposite direction or else there would be a preponderance of weight on one side of the card. The best simple test for the accurate placing of such a design is to draw a line vertically through the centre, when there should be an equal weight on both sides. Where colour is used this weight is dependent upon the vividness and depth of the colour.

Also to be considered is the principle of the fulcrum or see-saw. Suppose your fulcrum in the centre and a large weight near it, then a smaller weight farther from the centre will balance the larger. You have only to throw your mind back to the times when your father was at one end of the see-saw and you as a child were at the other: if there was any see-sawing your father had to move up on his side nearer the fulcrum. So on this Fig. c we have the letters, the heavier mass, moved nearer the centre than the price. Or, to look at it in another way, we have the letters larger because they are nearer the centre than the price.

Fig. d shows the mass values definitely reversed, the price being much heavier than the letters. The

A



B



C



D



PLATE 17.—SHOWCARD LAY-OUT

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

style of type used is very suitable, I think, for a plain statement of value ; somewhat more elaborate in arrangement, the letters are plainest of all in style. The long line of the F, with the lower curve echoing the top curve of the 6, helps to carry the eye rapidly to the price.

Plate 17 tackles a slightly more elaborate card or bill. This page very plainly emphasizes the need for adventure in thought and design. Nothing could be simpler in arrangement than the card shown at Fig. A. In fact it is so simple that it becomes unattractive. There are two kinds of simplicity—that resulting from much thought, and that which is the outcome of too little thought ; this is true in anything.

Fig. B is an attempt to avoid ignorant simplicity by some thought on composition. The same words are used in all these figures. Fig. B is certainly not wonderful ; but it does show a slight motion of the mind. Observe the harmony of the two forms of lettering used and yet their contrast in tone value. Surely, the message is carried home more slickly and more powerfully than in Fig. A.

An alternative design, which, to me, is a very distinct advance in every way, is shown at Fig. C. I admit that the name is made of little account ; but I maintain that the virtue of such a bill, which is designed to go in Mr. John Blunt's window, lies in the words "Quality & Value." Mr. John Blunt already has his name over his shop, and has clothes in his window ; the message to be told is the answer to the question, "What about John Blunt and his clothes ?" This Fig. C is much more lively than

LAY-OUT

the previous two. The use of the large “ & ” gives a touch of novelty most valuable.

“ But,” you may say, “ why give so much space and importance to such an insignificant word as ‘ and ’ ? ” Well, in the first place it is not an insignificant word on this bill ; it gives added emphasis to the word “ value.” Secondly, it is so large that it practically becomes a piece of attractive decoration ; especially is this so on account of the angular style and hollow stem. Such a trick could never be used in type as everything depends upon perfect spacing and the use of this original shaped “ &.” The space left between the words “ quality ” and “ value ” is also excellent as it emphasizes both words.

Fig. D is a return to the more conservative style ; but is, perhaps, the best conceived of all. The large C, with its heavy base, gives grace and strength. The long, thin lettering suggests quality. Note especially how the top lettering is in harmony with the top of the C, and the words “ quality ” and “ value ” continue the solid C base.

In all these examples, except the first, heed the squaring up of sides, giving an attractive completeness—a feeling of finish which is patently lacking in Fig. A.

On Plate 18 there are four designs which might well be for an advertisement in a periodical or newspaper or a handbill. The problem before the lay-out artist is to arrange certain words, figures, and reading matter in an attractive manner.

Fig. A, as on the previous plate, shows an obvious yet by no means an unsatisfactory lay-out. The

A



B



C



D



PLATE 18.—ADVERTISEMENT LAY-OUT.



PLATE 19. —USIS OF HALF-TONE MASSES.
(Reduced from $8\frac{1}{2}$ ins. $5\frac{1}{4}$ ins.)

LAY-OUT

chief objection is that it is so very ordinary. One seems to have seen it so often. This may be an argument for something good, yet it may be the reverse.

Fig. B is an attempt to vary, and broadly speaking the result is more striking. It has also a better selling "pull" by its emphasis on the word "drink."

Fig. C is at first sight too simple to be worth while; but the heavy type of the words "Sunny Tea" in contrast to the rest; the centring of the figures, thereby giving greater eye-catching value; and the fact that the word "Tea" is not centred and balances the small wording at the top, all go to make a better bill than either of the previous ones.

Finally, we have a very distinctive, straightforward lay-out in Fig. D. All the emphasis in this bill is very fairly distributed. The words "Sunny Tea" are original in design and attractive in setting. The sub-heading and "write-up" or reading matter are perfectly simple. The placing of figures, large S, and the matter are interesting and well balanced. The style of the large lettering is, I think, very suitable to the subject. This is proved by comparing it with Figs. A, B and C. Somehow the quaint black masses of this style look like "tea"; perhaps because they have an eastern effect.

These four rough lay-outs are but small examples for your guidance and to illustrate the essentials of such designing. For efficiency you must practise continually in the making of lay-outs, and criticize and analyse the many finished specimens to be

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

found in all periodicals. Ask yourself why a certain lay-out is good or bad ; how it could be improved without altering the wording ; how you would alter, enlarge, or simplify the wording ; and whether the illustration is happy ; does the lettering harmonize with the subject, is it well spaced, is it easily read ? Criticize even the type used in reading matter. Get books on type, printers' type catalogues if possible, for if you should ever have to lay-out a newspaper advertisement you will need to choose the type carefully that it may harmonize with your hand-drawn heading, etc.

The two rough designs for a poster on Plate 20 show how, even in the earliest rough, great consideration and thought must be taken for the lettering. The chief difference in these two "roughs" is that the wording is reversed, one having the name above and the other having it below the picture. Undoubtedly the most valuable position is at the top. Never forget that in all advertising it is the name that counts ; better forget the commodity than the name. All the rest of the poster is merely to impress upon you the name and to link up the name with the product. This last reason justifies the placing of the slogan first as in Fig. B. One is more likely to remember a catchy slogan than a name, but, if there is the slightest risk that the public will remember the slogan or picture and forget the name, then put the name first. This explains why I have put in so boldly the word "Noble's" on Fig. B.

By the way, I do not think I have mentioned

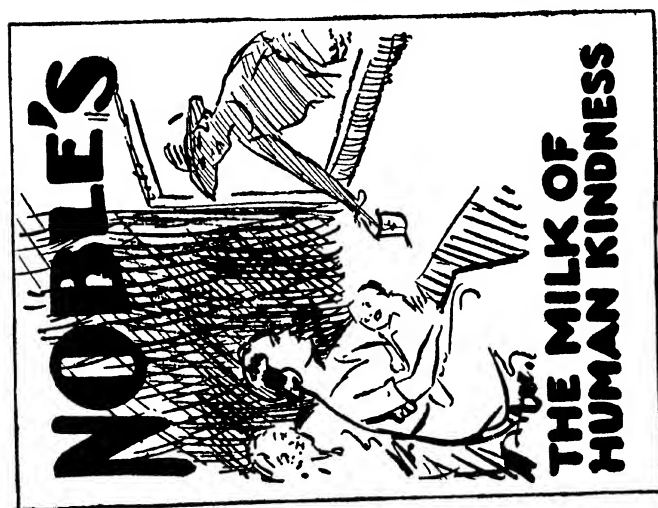


PLATE 20.—POSTER LAY-OUT.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

that white letters on a black background are about thirty per cent. more arresting than black on white, provided they are bold. Small white lettering on black is apt to be difficult to read.

With regard to the merits of these two designs, I give the vote to Fig. A for the following reason. Fig. A design is headed "Noble's," and, provided the picture is well drawn, the looker must ask himself "Noble's what?" and so get to the slogan beneath; but in Fig. B there is the slogan, "The Milk of Human Kindness," at the top, and many a careless looker might well pass on, for the slogan and the picture complete the thought, except for the little question "Whose?" which is not a question many people will trouble to ask themselves. As to printing, I prefer Fig. A. It is simpler, yet as powerful in its setting as Fig. B. All these considerations are very commercial, and there are hundreds more for you to find, and, having found, to reason on. I do but give you a start on the road to a successful "lay-out" mind.

Commercialism is not opposed to art. I think it was Ruskin who defined art as being utility plus symmetry. There is no such thing as art for art's sake. Art is but a perfect expression of a feeling and thought. Sometimes the thought is great and deep; usually, in advertisement, it is small and evanescent; but so long as it is true it is justified; the art applied is justified, and the art should be of the best. To contrive, by artistic design, to ensure that people eat good food or wear good clothes or buy cheaply is by no means a base object. Indeed,



PLATE 21.-- MODERN DESIGN IN LAY-OUT.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

this is far nobler than many a subject seen in great art galleries.

To sum up our past words : Learn to draw firmly, evenly, yet sensitively. Use your imagination in design, your discretion in style, and your sense of proportion in arrangement.

The examples we are now going to discuss are instructive in their adaptation of sound design to modern needs. I have purposely based my remarks hitherto on simple designs, but I feel that a few examples of modern methods will assist you to feel your feet and to produce saleable work quickly.

The design for tooth-paste on Plate 21 has some interesting features. Notice the contrast of sloping corners with the right-angled centre. Notice the happy trick of using one T for the two words. Notice the composition or balance of the whole, yet no monotonous evenness. Notice that the name of the product is emphasized by being the only lettering white on black (remember that white on black is more pulling than black on white). Notice that, owing to the erratic design, I have kept the lettering uniform in style, varying only the thickness of stroke and size. The great risk when drawing such simple but original lay-outs is to crowd or to overweight certain parts. The temptation in this design was to make the words "tooth-paste" too heavy.

Plate 22 has, I believe, a surprise for you. I cannot discuss the drawing of this plate, for every bit of it can be supplied from type. The heavy lettering is a good example of the many new and

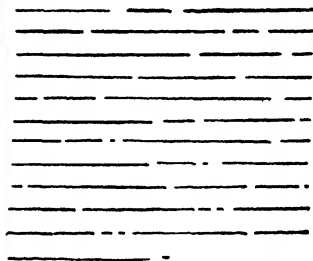


EFFICIENCY

& ABILITY



*These are the words of
moment in every business.
Upon these has the House
of Ward's been founded—*



WARD'S
19 TO 31 CORK AVENUE.

PLATE 22.—LAY-OUT FOR TYPE FACES.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

attractive type faces which are being cast. The lines are simple rules stocked by every printer. In fact, all you would need for such a design is a good pencil lay-out, clearly marked with the required type faces and sizes. Printers do not like setting a lot of sloping rules, therefore a design such as this will be easy for the printer and pleasing to the advertiser. Its simplicity is its safeguard. Heed the attractive irregularity of pattern caused by the breaks in the perpendicular lines. Heed the generous allowance of white space. Heed the force of the graded lines and the softening of the heavy rules with thin rules. Such designs look obvious and easy to construct, but are not often obtained. So often overcrowding, or a monotony of spacing, or a bad balance, or a confused effect, or the use of wrong type face and size—so often one of these troubles creeps in and spoils your design as a good commercial sales proposition. All the time you are composing an advertisement you must not only think “good design” but “selling force.” Will your lay-out and lettering sell the goods?

The obvious problems of simple lay-out work are shown on Plate 24. I have supposed a rectangular photograph or drawing is to be used in a 4 by 3 proportioned advertisement. The copy or wording consists of about two lines of important slogan and an amount of less important matter.

Fig. A and B show alternative arrangements for the placing of the copy. You will notice that 150 words are used in each. The greater importance of the larger mass of 80 words at Fig. B is



PLATE 23. HARMONY BETWEEN LETTERING AND LAY-OUT.
(Reduced from 8 ins. $5\frac{1}{2}$ ins.)

LAY-OUT

only justified if the wording and sales value are not lessened by using the smaller type for the remaining 70 words.

You should of course obtain a chart of the sizes of type. 12 point is larger than 8 point, but only practice and experiment will enable you to choose the right size of type for the inclusion of a certain amount of copy in a given area. Also you must get a book of type faces used by printers in order that you may obtain exact results.

Fig. c shows an adjustment of Figs. A and B, made possible by the addition of some wording. This is a better lay-out than the previous two, yet has more words.

In Fig. D I have placed the name at the top, over the picture. The result would, I fear, be weak at the bottom. Never place all the strength and interest at the top, for the risk is incurred of the reader's interest failing before he has read the entire advertisement.

Which one of these four lay-outs should be used? Well, it all depends upon the copy or wording. If possible see the exact copy and decide upon the lay-out which would render it most readable and attractive. Of course, if the copy is not written or is left to you, then you can design the best lay-out possible and write the correct amount of copy afterwards.

Before passing from the consideration of the lay-out of type and copy I turn your attention to Plate 25. The thin lines represent lines of type, the marks at lower left corner suggest a trade mark or small drawing.

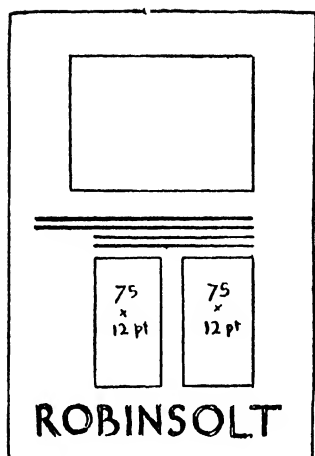
LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

The adjustment of type copy into an irregular shape such as shown here is a very useful way of getting attractive design without much artistic work. Such type should be of a fairly bold face and well spaced or, in the language of the printer, heavily leaded ; otherwise it will not easily be readable. When varying the shape of a type setting do not make it too narrow or there will be difficulty in arranging the words, and do not cramp the shape or the copy.

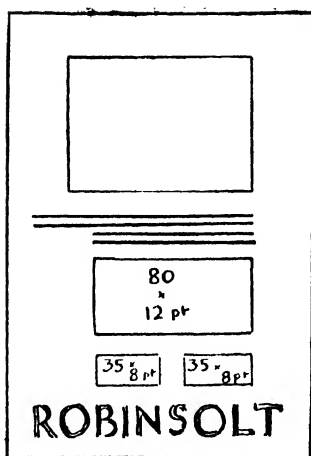
In no circumstances depart from the rectangular shape for type unless you have a clear reason, the reason in Plate 25 being the strong pull downwards to the price and product.

We will now turn to Plate 3 where I show a very simple rough lay-out facsimile, excepting reduction. For such work any bold dark pencil is effective. The picture of the piano might of course be a photograph or a drawing. In any case the word "GOOD'S" must, in the finished design, be drawn on to it. If a photograph is used, you must stick down a print on to a piece of card and work the D and S with process white over the photograph. You will agree, I think, that the word "GOOD'S" adds considerably to the attraction of this lay-out by running over on to the picture and side tone. Also this device links up the name with the article.

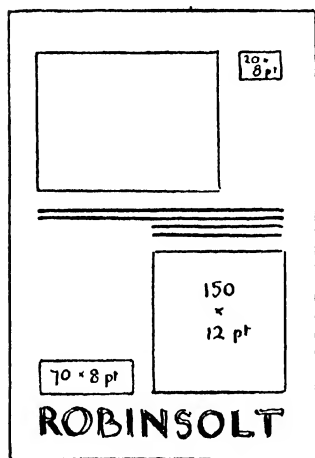
The importance of the half tone at left side and bottom is worth noting. This half tone balances the heavy tone of the picture, gives much emphasis to the wording, and most usefully accentuates the name and address at the bottom.



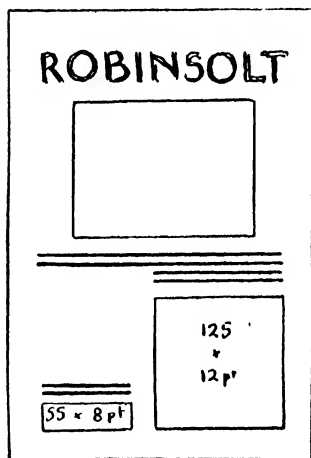
A



B



C



D

PLATE 24.—FOUR SIMPLE LAY-OUTS.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

By making it a half tone and not full black, you avoid making it conflict with or drown the wording, but it strengthens the capital G and serves as an unconscious eye-line for the lettering.

To elaborate my last point, I may well explain the reasons for squaring up masses of lettering. Neatness of course is a result of such squaring. Also the design or composition is more definite. But the real reason for arranging one's copy or wording within straight lines is legibility—the key word to all good lettering.

The eye, when reading, works automatically. As I have pointed out, one usually sees only the upper part of letters when reading quickly. Also the eye, having finished a line, automatically returns to the spot directly beneath the first word of the line just read. The eye is used to finding the new line commence directly beneath the old one. In publicity where one is enticing people to read something for which they have no predilection, it is wise to make the reading easy and comfortable. Habit is powerful, and certainly it is not wise to run counter to the acquired habit of the eye unless there is a very strong reason.

Returning, for one more glance, to Plate 3, I am wondering if you will think the blank space beneath the picture too large. Let me justify it. First it gives great importance to the picture, and as the picture is the eye-catcher of this advertisement this space serves a valuable purpose. Secondly, it assures that you see the name, for, if there was

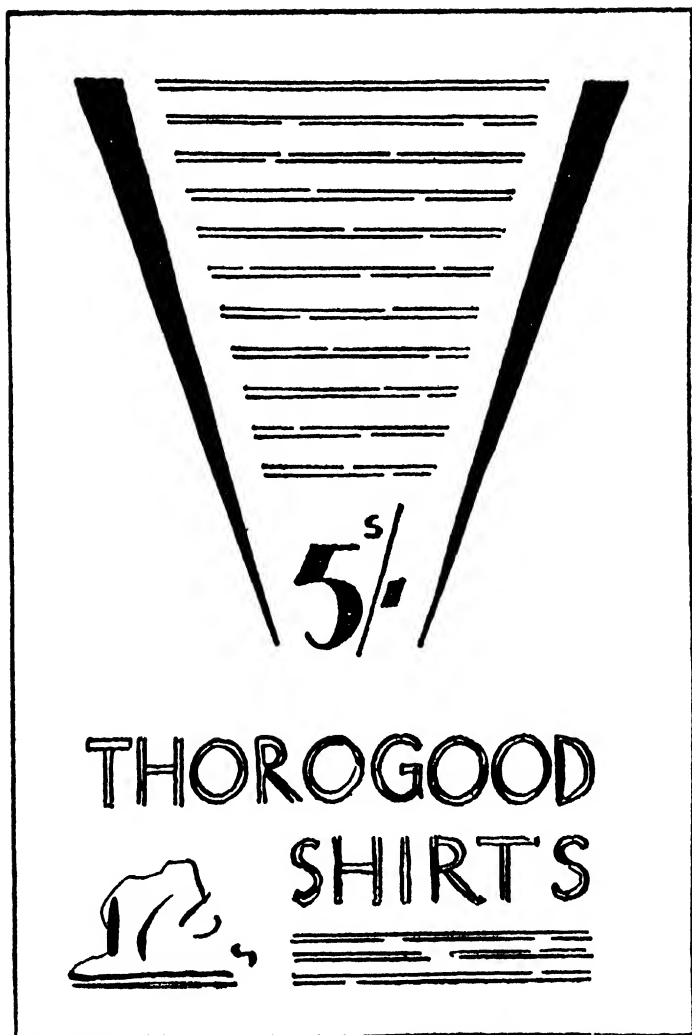


PLATE 25.—DESIGN FOR MASSES OF TYPE.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

any wording in this space, one's eye might easily read only that, and miss the name. You may ask, "Why not place the name beneath the picture?" For the reason already given—that one must get the public eye on the picture first. No one is interested in "GOOD'S," but many are interested in pianos, or a nicely produced picture. Finally, this blank space emphasizes the small copy in the bottom left-hand corner, which would, no doubt, be useful reading about the piano's peculiar qualities; also the address stands out boldly; the mind registration of this lay-out, as it stands, being: piano—GOOD'S—Regent St., London.

The use of half tone in lettering is most valuable. Even when reserved for a border. As suggested in this rough lay-out of Plate 3, a grey tone is not only attractive but often essential for the effective display of the lettering. But if you turn to Plate 19 you will perceive an enormous field for the designing of lettering opened up by the use of one or more greys.

This design on Plate 19 would appear too heavy if carried out entirely in black, and too flat if a grey had been used throughout. The sparkle or, if I may use a slang term, the "kick," is the result of black and grey combined. The black is reserved for the two vital spots—the first capital and the name of the product.

Such designs as this must be very simple in their composition, or confusion will result. Always remember that in commercial design your aim should be first to grip the attention of the reader, second to tell your message as quickly as possible.

LAY-OUT

My reason for using so few words on this lay-out is the unusual lettering, which is not so easily read as more orthodox styles and hence should be bold and restricted to as few words as possible.

It is a safe rule that, when you have a lot of copy or wording to put into a design, then the design must be very straightforward and the lettering as clear as possible ; but when you have, as in this design on Plate 19, only a few words to use, then you may take advantage of tone masses and more original lettering.

Notice in this plate how the name is emphasized by the sloping lines, all other lines in the design being right-angled, *i.e.*, horizontal and vertical. Also note the harmony between the severe lines of the design and the extremely simple style of lettering used for the words "Safety First."

Harmony between lettering and the subject of the lettering has already been advocated, but, that it may be more firmly fixed in your minds, I have included the design shown at Plate 23. Here is lettering drawn in two tones with small white gaps in places. Every letter carries the suggestion already given by a decorative impression of clouds and rain-drops. Such simple variations from actual type faces should always be your aim. Of course half tone or the use of greys will help you much. The only solid black lettering is the name and address. Very seldom may one vary the tone of the name of the advertised product. The rule is to keep it bold and black, not necessarily large.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

This plate should perhaps be in my book of this series entitled "A Manual on Figure Drawing and Fashion Designing," but its first lesson is suitability of lettering. Its next lesson is—take advantage of half tone whenever the advertiser will allow the extra expense. The lines suggesting rain run at right angles to the words "reliable raincoats," thereby emphasizing them. The decorative cloud forms make an arresting border. The whole design has a pleasant pictorial effect with a minimum of pictorial design.

Finally, I show, on the plate which has been used as a frontispiece (Plate 1), the valuable use of an air brush. An air brush is an expensive but, frequently, an essential item in the commercial letterer's studio. If you have not the means or convenience to obtain one then do not attempt a design of this style. The procedure calls for considerable care. Let me take the example before us and briefly describe how it was drawn.

First of all, I made a rough lay-out with a pencil. Then I redrew my shapes carefully and very lightly on a smooth card. Next, I cut from pieces of stiff thin card the curly shapes which stand out clearly in the design. Using these as a kind of stencil I sprayed on my graded tones. Finally, I drew in the lettering. The time taken is very brief considering the result. No amount of careful washes could produce the effect of graded tones running into and over other graded tones. A circle cut out of a piece of card was used for the three dark spots. Of course, when using the air brush you should prepare a design which displays the advantages

LAY OUT

and attractions of the instrument. The main attractions are a perfect gradation of tone and the working of one such tone over another.

You have, no doubt, noticed that the darkest spot of this design is around the name; that the name is white on black (always strong in effect); that the words "Safety First" curve downwards to the name, thereby pulling the eye down; and that the words "safety first with" are not in black or too thick and, therefore, do not rival the name in importance, although the latter is smaller.

At the end of this book I have arranged for the printer to give a page of type faces and their technical sizes, and the varying thickness of type faces. For these examples I have chosen the type called Garamond as being one of the most ordinary and legible forms for use in the body or copy of a lay-out. But I advise you to obtain a book of type faces and their variations as issued by large printers and type foundries. Not only is a knowledge of printers' type useful for laying out a design where no finished drawing is permitted, but the hand-letterer may learn much from the stock type faces: he may learn what is considered by long experience to be good readable lettering; how to vary lettering to make it distinctive from type; and also he may learn what is and can be done by type, that is to say, he will know where as a hand-letterer he is not wanted.

Also you will see a page of rules, endings, borders, etc., with which every printer is stocked. Following these are three settings of type, showing

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

the effect of leading or spacing by the printer. These three settings show (1) no leading, (2) single leading, (3) double leading. It is clear that leading is of great legible value to the advertiser who can afford the added space.

I need not emphasize that the laws of harmony in colour must be followed as strictly in commercial art as in picture painting. In fact the principles governing colour blending and contrast are more vital in advertising. This is quite obvious when we consider that much bolder and simpler colour schemes are used and much more importance is attached to the instantaneous attraction of a poster than of a picture.

When designing a show-card for a shop window it is well to remember the type of shop. A card which looks well in a fried fish shop would look very odd in a high-class tailor's. Also you may be helped by knowing the outside colouring of the shop, the colour of the flooring and backing of the window, and the general line of the products to be shown. For example, if the shop is of light oak and the clothing to be shown is pale brown, then a harsh red ticket would be most unhappy. Generally speaking, the more "toney" the shop the cooler the colours. This principle applies to posters also. Just as, when designing your letters, you seek to form such as will harmonize with the subject or product; so, in colour, you must obtain a scheme in keeping with the thing advertised. Be fresh, daring, bold, bizarre; but, however you work, be harmonious and always remember that it is your business to bend or direct

LAY-OUT

your art to the service of your subject. Have this outlook continually before you, draw cleanly and clearly, use fresh colour, and you cannot fail to do good work and saleable work.

Again I draw your close and earnest attention to the parts of your lay-out left blank. Why is it that the most arresting advertisements, showcards, posters, etc., are nearly always those with plenty of blank space? One answer is that, just as your colour must be bolder and simpler in commercial work than in pictorial art, so must your detail. You have seen small pictures in huge mounts which hold the eye with, very often, unwarrantable force. In the world of commercial publicity such force is not merely excusable but desirable: large spaces in an advertisement lay-out are as large mounts to pictures.

CHAPTER V

MATERIAL

THERE are many books in which a large space is devoted to the consideration of and advice upon materials. In this little book my aim has been to foster and help an artistic approach to and understanding of the often-despised form of art—lettering; hence I can spend little space on more practical but to my mind less important information.

There are one or two important tips for those who would produce hand-drawn tickets for display as distinct from showcards and posters for printing.

Of course you will get a T-square and drawing-board.

The common surface to work upon is enamel card (of best quality); but for those who are reading this book with the intention of doing their own little bit of ticket writing, and not of selling, any card of any surface may be tried, so long as it will take the ink or paint and is hard and firm with no tendency to curl.

Brushes for ticket-writing must be “writer’s” brushes of red sable, usually sold in quills. For small quick work, especially script and italics, you may well buy pens of varying width with which you will be able to write very rapidly.

MATERIAL

Hand-lettered tickets are usually worked in a shiny ticket ink called "Japan" or "glossy." This on enamel card gives a smooth surface which may be dusted and which holds a minimum of dust. For a dull effect use ordinary waterproof ink. Coloured shiny inks can be made from powdered colour and gum, but the powdered colours must be ground exceedingly small. Waterproof colours may be obtained suitable for out-of-door work.

Most hand-lettering apart from price tickets is for use on a showcard, poster, story heading, book cover, or advertisement, *i.e.*, for print. Consequently, the materials do not matter except as they affect the effect.

For posters and showcards there are poster and mat colours in a hundred shades—I leave you to choose your own. The problem of colour is the same in all art and hence cannot be treated here; but I make this emphasis—be bold but beautiful; be strong but attractive.

For printed work use any paper or surface which may suit your purpose. For fine colour work I advise a hot pressed fashion board or similar surface. Bristol board for black and white work is hard, but very safe for beginners, as it will never "pick up" or encourage a ragged edge when a pen is used.

If you would learn quick ticket-writing thoroughly go into a studio, even if the pay is nearly nothing. Such experience will save months of earnest isolated endeavour.

CHAPTER VI

HEADINGS

ALTHOUGH well arranged type is more frequently used in book covers and headings to-day than was the case ten years ago, yet here is an enormous field for a really original letter artist, especially if he can manage small illustrations. Many a figure or subject artist is a failure at headings, etc., because he has not troubled to study and to enjoy lettering. I used to long to get at the illustration and to finish with the heading to the story which I was illustrating. Now I can honestly say that the heading interests me as much as the illustration. I have at last learned to love good lettering and to enjoy designing a heading in harmony with the yarn.

I give on Plate 26 two headings which may help you to see the importance of lettering to a story. Remember that in a book one may safely design more fancifully than on a poster or advertisement, because the reader is closely engaged with the book and is not rapidly passing by. Get the spirit of the story into your heading and be careful to leave plenty of white spaces. A cramped or crowded heading is a mean start for a story, and



C

BROWN & SON LTD
WALPOLE STREET
LONDON
W.C.2.
TELEPHONE:
CENTRAL 212

PLATE 26.—HEADINGS.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

suggests anything but amusement, knowledge, or adventure.

If there is an illustration to the heading, as at Fig. A, the style of pen-work must be in harmony with the lettering or *vice versa*. For instance, the illustration shown here would not be suitable or in keeping with such lettering as shown at Figs. A, B, and D, Plate 7, whereas Fig. C would be. Contrast may be obtained by a lightly drawn illustration combined with bold head letters; but such contrast must not be extreme. The small solid "blacks" of this illustration harmonize happily with the spottiness of the lettering.

Fig. B shows an attempt to get the feeling of the title and story in lettering alone. Note the gradation of size, which suggests strong climax. The transverse white slashes give an impression of startling movement, as also do the jagged edges of the black panel.

At Fig. C I have inserted an example of hand-drawn letter-heading. Many original designs may easily be thought of in this branch of lettering. Be sure you know the type of firm. Fig. C was designed for a publicity firm and would be most unsuitable for a conservative firm of chartered accountants. Remember always the early points of this book, which emphasized the way by which the hand-letterer can always beat mere type—spacing, curved and fanciful letters, adaptability, and suitability to subject. Be original but not freakish, be fanciful but readable, and however attractive your style and design do not forget that

HEADINGS

a firm clean outline is essential. Make your vertical lines truly vertical ; never hesitate to rule guide lines whenever you are uncertain of freehand accuracy.

Although most letter-headings are from type, there is room for the artist in their lay-out. Personally I have found several small printers, who have not their own studio, and consequently welcome the opportunity to co-operate with an experienced lay-out artist. Such work is of course not highly paid. With a printer's type-face book, you may materially assist a printer in the production of truly artistic headings for which he will gladly pay you. Also by doing such small work you keep in touch with the printer and receive any other and more attractive work which he may have to give.

CHAPTER VII

ILLUMINATING AND BOOK DECORATION

ILLUMINATING is a work of care. No slap-dash quick effects are of value in this field of art. A painstaking ability is needed. It is an art of the highest order; it has been practised by all literary nations for hundreds of years. If you visited the Persian art collection of 1931 at Burlington House you saw some wonderful illuminated books; but even these so much admired works are not more beautiful than those in our permanent museums—The British, The Guildhall, etc. Marvellously beautiful are the ancient mediæval manuscripts.

Before venturing to attempt any serious work of illumination you should certainly contrive to see some original specimens of these old masterpieces. Even the modern letter-writer of receptivity and an outlook for ideas will get some of great value—ideas for lay-out decoration and styles of lettering and capitals.

First, we must consider material, and I earnestly advise you to exercise careful choice in your material. In work such as we are briefly considering, good material is essential.

Pens.—You notice that I say “pens,” not “brushes.” Nearly all illuminating is a true writing

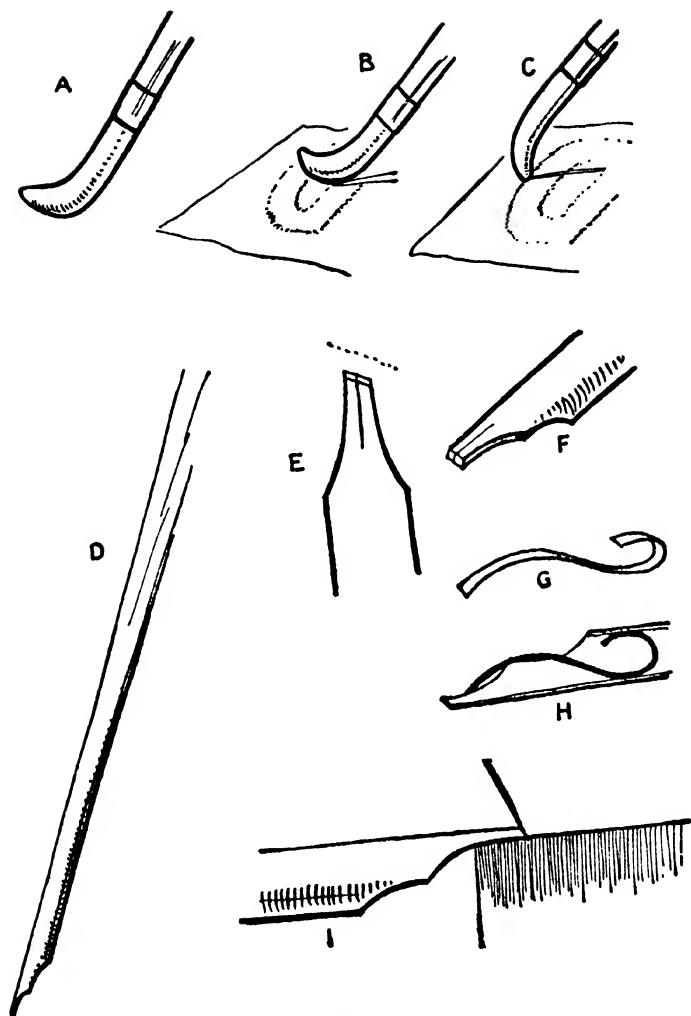


PLATE 27.—ILLUMINATING MATERIAL.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

with a quill pen (see Fig. D, Plate 27), which may be obtained from most stationers. You will find a short slit in the nib of your quill; this should not be tampered with unless it is less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch, when it should be slightly lengthened. This slit is shown at Figs. E and F, Plate 27.

Every quill must be cut before use, the usual angle of the tip being much as shown at Fig. E, and the slope downwards as at Fig. F. The first thing to do is to shape the rib by paring it carefully at the curved sides until they are curved as at Fig. E. To cut the nib lay it on a hard surface (I use the base of a square glass ink-well—see Fig. 1) and, with a very sharp knife, cut firmly as shown on this plate, being sure that you get both slopes, *i.e.*, downwards and crossways. Be quite sure that you get a really clean-cut straight edge.

The next thing is to get a piece of thin tin bent as at Fig. G. I have cut a spring, satisfactory both in thickness and elasticity, from the side of a milk tin. It is not necessary to have much “spring” in the metal. Now set the spring in the pen as shown at Fig. H, and your writing quill is complete. By the time you have shaped and cut a few quills you will appreciate the aptness of the name pen-knife which was given by our ancestors to the knife to be carried about for pen shaping.

If you wish to re-cut a nib either on account of wear or a range of width, you must, first of all, lengthen the slit slightly by bending the nib back, then you must re-pare the sides and finally re-bevel your edge to the required width and angle.

When you commence to write, hold your pen at a

A Lettering and ill

B lettering and illun

C Lettering and illum

D lettering and illumin

E lettering and illum

F 

G 

H 

PLATE 29.—HISTORIC TYPES AND EXAMPLES OF LINE FINISHINGS.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

especially in capitals. On Plate 31 I show several such ventures which occurred to me when writing this. Be as modern and original as you please, so long as your writing is beautiful and legible. Readability, I admit, is not of such importance in an illuminated address as in a news advertisement; but, nevertheless, the easier read the better the lettering.

If you work naturally and easily you cannot but obtain a pleasant form; and, if to this you add individual experiment, you will soon find what variations may be achieved in the making and finishing of your letters. For example, Fig. A, Plate 29, has the thin strokes horizontal and the thick strokes vertical. Fig. B is a very similar style written with a sloping pen. Note carefully the difference in detail and general effect. Study intelligently the attractions, and their cause, of the square styled Fig. D.

Now we must consider the various finishing strokes, serifs, etc., which give such definite distinction to a style of writing. On Plate 29 you will have noticed the peculiar but charming short t's of Fig. A. Fig. C is solely peculiar in its long double-tailed finishings. But I want you thoroughly to memorize the five serifs shown at Fig. A, Plate 30. From these all other variations of serifs spring. Practise them all until you are able to produce them with ease and sureness.

Then there are endings as shown at Fig. B. Of course these are a few simple and orthodox examples. You must contrive to think out better ones, and ones quite suitable for your purpose; but be

A **SERIFS** T T T T T

B endings t e
m p

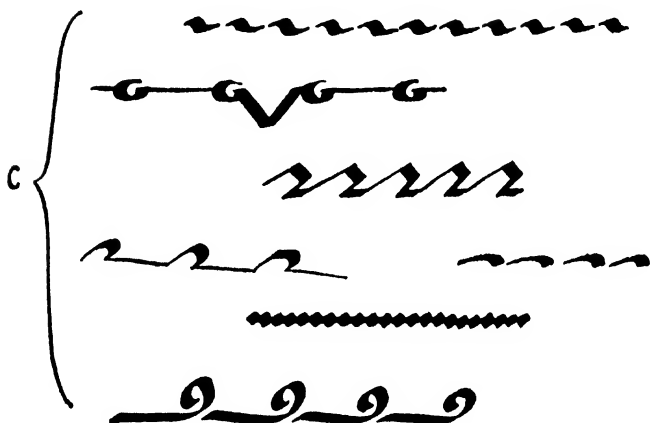


PLATE 30.—SERIFS AND ENDINGS.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

sure they are better, for I have found that these simple finishings of many hundred years back are hard to beat. The main use for such elongated endings is to "square up" a short line with others.

With capitals you may really let your fancy run. Here is a great opportunity for modern illumination. Historic principles for the decoration of capitals are known, more or less, by all. Scrolls and figures intertwined ingeniously are to be found surrounding the capital of many good old books.

To me it is lamentable that, having learned the lessons of harmony, balance, care, etc., from the ancients, we moderns should continue to copy them; for a copy is never equal to the original if such be a work of genius, and any but works of genius is unworthy of a copy. Let your mind be unhampered by historic forms and style and colours. So long as you obtain a design suitable for the subject, the material, and the purpose, you may do as you wish.

On Plate 31 you see a few capitals and their decoration. They are not essentially modern, but they will give you a faint idea of the scope you have in this joyous section of illuminating. It is a sound rule to limit your decoration to a background, although at times a portion of the decoration may infringe over the letters as roughly shown at Fig. c. It is proper to draw your large elaborate capitals with a quill pen cut somewhat finer than for the accompanying small letters, and then, if so desired, to fill in with a broad pen.

The old principle of making the upright stems of large capitals to taper slightly towards the centre

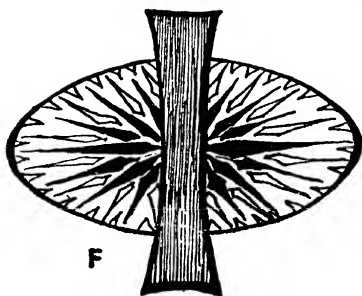
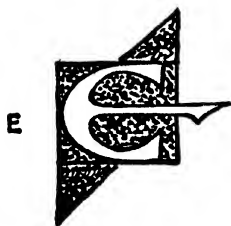
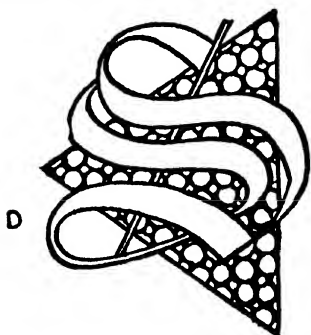
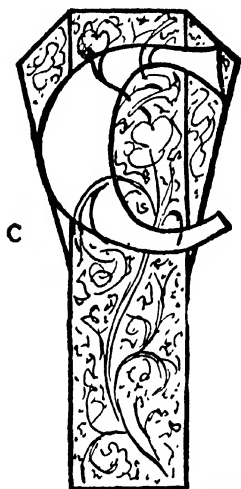
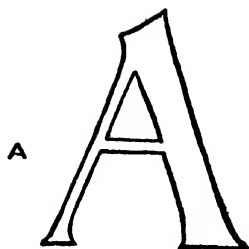


PLATE 31.—DECORATED CAPITALS.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

as at Fig. A and Fig. F is sound ; it abolishes any possible clumsiness and gives grace and firmness. When you desire to place a capital in a rectangular shape and to fill in with pattern be sure your pattern does not swamp the letter. Figs. A and B show the approximate strength of an average capital.

As to colour, I say nothing. If you study the laws of harmony and have an eye for colour you may do what you will ; if not, you had better limit yourself to black and red or gold. Simplicity in colour is safe, but I suggest that you experiment with various colours, for here again is a thrilling side of illuminating.

Generally, one should keep the actual script black with perhaps an occasional phrase or the small capitals in red ; never attempt colouring of any kind without a careful consideration of a colour scheme. Nothing is as doomed to failure as chance colouring ; even the use of red should be pre-determined in a rough lay-out.

There are many spheres in the modern world of letters for illumination and hand-writing quite apart from illuminated addresses. These are almanacs, menus, programmes, headings for letter paper, and title pages. I know of no lettering better than that of the old quill pen for a dignified or quality " touch " in titles and headings. Anywhere where modern boldness and " shout " are not needed you will use a quill with its charming easy variableness.

Now that manuscripts are no longer needed, the *forte* of illumination is in the field of addresses and testimonials. Here there is yet a market for good work ; and here not only are the matter and size

ILLUMINATING

suitable for an elaborate design, but the nature of the production lends itself to illuminated ornament in colour and gold.

Here is a very brief guide for the use of gold. Small spots, lines and stars, etc., may well be put on with gold paint, which is sold in shells or powder form. Be sure it is pure gold and mix it with a little gum. For capitals and all important mass gilding it is necessary to raise and burnish the gold. Gold leaf is to be obtained in small books from artist material suppliers.

If the capital to be gilded is with no background design, as at Fig. A, Plate 31, do not draw in ink, but make a very light pencil drawing on a perfectly clean surface. With a specially prepared size, which may be easily obtained, and which must be mixed with water to a thick yet "runny" consistency, you must cover your initial or background (whichever is to be gilded). Do this with your board quite flat. Give a full thick coating, adding more with your pen as may be necessary to obtain an even distribution. Especially take care that you have as much as may be held on the thin lines. When this size is dry—it will often take a day to dry—you must start the gilding, for if left too long the size will be too hard.

Take a leaf of gold from your book and cut off the piece required to cover your capital. Now breathe steadily on the size until tacky on the surface, lay on your gold leaf, place your paper on a hard surface, metal if possible, and spread a piece of thin tough paper over it. Rub evenly and thoroughly with the burnisher as suggested at Figs. B and C, Plate 27;

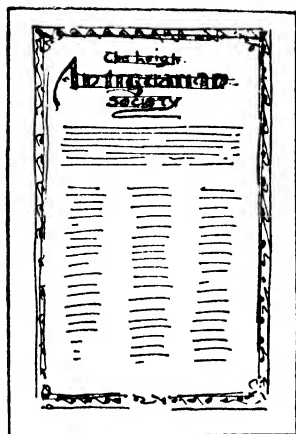
LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

then remove the paper and the leaf-paper. I usually give two layers of gold in this manner to ensure a complete covering.

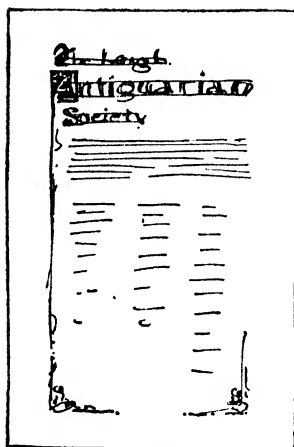
In Figs. A, B and C, Plate 27, I have drawn the best shape of agate burnisher. When you have lightly dusted the gold with a sable brush you may start burnishing, but be sure the size is quite dry and do not breathe on the gold. Rub very, very lightly with the rounded part of the burnisher over your gold. Keep going over the whole with a rotating motion. If you feel a roughness stop at once and find the cause. Is the size sticky? Is the burnisher imperfectly clean?

Experience alone will tell you how to overcome the many and subtle difficulties of this art-craft. Books have been written with much more detailed accounts of this process. I can but touch on it. But once having produced a good burnished capital you will appreciate the full joy of the illuminator.

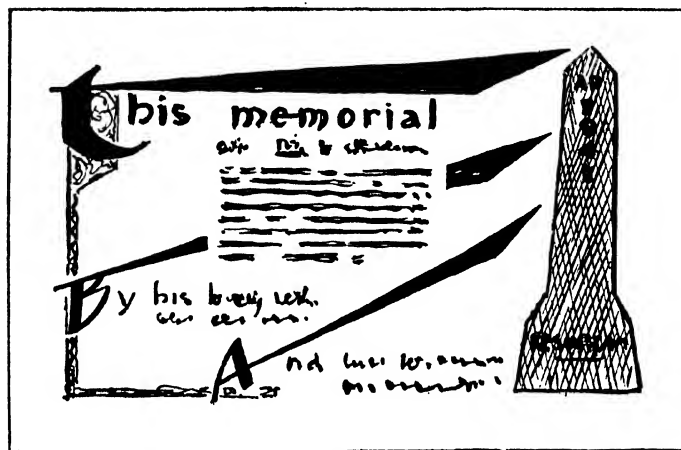
We have now mentioned all the spheres of illuminating and writing except design. This is of great importance but has, in the past, been considered only in a very orthodox manner. On Plate 32, Fig. A, you observe a safe and honoured basis for the design of an illuminated address. Fig. B is the usual variant. Fig. A has a complete border which may vary hugely in thickness, whereas Fig. B has but a side and corner decoration and is somewhat less formal in appearance. Choice of design, colour, and lettering is yours. As an example of variation in pattern, I reproduce on Plate 29, Figs. F and G, two continuation endings with which one might adorn an address presented by a Grocers' Associa-



A



B



C

PLATE 32.—DESIGN IN ILLUMINATION.

LETTERING AND LAY-OUT

tion. You observe that the design is based upon a pig in one case and cheeses in another. At Fig. H of this plate I have made a sketch of some decoration on the same address showing peppercorns and ginger. Such local colour is to be seized as a variant to orthodox finishings as shown at Fig. c, Plate 30.

In the matter of design, I suggest, somewhat fearfully I own, that you experiment. Rid your mind of any historic styles, excepting to remember their quality and undoubted charm, and try a design in your own way.

At Fig. c, Plate 32, I give a "rough" for a suggested memorial, purposely ignoring orthodox principles and aiming at something new. Design changes with the age, as we can see in architecture, music, and all art. Consequently, it is of no use for writers and illuminators to keep in the well-worn ruts made by the monks of the Middle Ages. Experiment, experiment, but please remember that it is useless to experiment in design if your technique or drawing is weak and shaky. Learn to write and colour and gild; then try to express this modern age—your age—by this ancient and beautiful means.

SIZES OF TYPE

8 point.

THE LETTERS AND WORDS WE use have been shaped by time

10 point.

THE LETTERS AND WORDS we use have been shaped

11 point.

THE LETTERS AND WORDS we use have been

12 point.

THE LETTERS AND words we use have been

14 point.

THE LETTERS AND words we use have

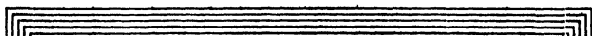
18 point.

THE LETTERS and words we

24 point.

LETTERS and words we

PRINTERS' RULES AND ORNAMENTS



SPECIMENS OF TYPE-SETTING

(1) *Solid.*

Any word, whether written, drawn, or printed, must be clearly and readily legible. A word is an arrangement of lines which, by use and agreement, have an understood meaning in the minds of many men. Primitive writing was a series of pictures telling the tale. Later these became simplified into a shape understood to mean what

(2) *Thin-leaded.*

Any word, whether written, drawn, or printed, must be clearly and readily legible. A word is an arrangement of lines which, by use and agreement, have an understood meaning in the minds of many men. Primitive writing was a series of pictures telling the tale. Later these became

(3) *Thick-leaded.*

Any word, whether written, drawn, or printed, must be clearly and readily legible. A word is an arrangement of lines which, by use and agreement, have an understood meaning in the minds of many men. Primitive writing was a series of pictures telling the tale. Later these became

Printed for the Publishers
at the BURLEIGH PRESS
Lawin's Mead, BRISTOL

147.745

